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## Aquatic Species at Risk

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# The Fishing Industry and the Species at Risk Act

Like many people involved in Canada's commercial fishery, you probably have questions about the country's new *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) and what it means for you. While the specifics vary depending on the fish you catch, there are some important—and helpful—things to understand in general about the Act.

## What it's all about

The *Species at Risk Act* was created to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of species at risk due to human activity, and to manage species of special concern, making sure they don't become endangered or threatened. SARA not only prohibits the killing, harming, harassing, capturing or taking of species at risk, but also makes it illegal to destroy their critical habitats.

Obviously, no single organization or entity can be responsible on its own for achieving the goals of SARA. Governments and stakeholder groups across Canada must all work together. In fact, the Act was designed to encourage such cooperation.

So, while the fishing industry has a role to play in meeting the requirements of SARA—a role that will demand some changes in the ways the industry operates—it won't be acting alone.

## Working together

Under SARA, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) must produce recovery strategies and action plans for aquatic species listed as endangered or threatened. Recovery strategies for fish and marine species currently listed under SARA will be developed in close collaboration with the fishing industry and must be completed as soon as 2006.

At DFO, we're working closely with fishers to ensure that the protective measures we develop as part of these strategies and plans are practical, effective, and in keeping with a sound fisheries management approach.

Specific measures could be required for any given fishery. The possibilities include restrictions on bycatch of listed species; modifications of fishing gear; modifications of fishing season openings; fishing area closures; and closures or reductions in fisheries. Obviously, we want to ensure that a sustainable fishing industry can be maintained while meeting the requirements of SARA to protect species at risk. That's why all measures will be developed by DFO in collaboration with the affected fisheries.

Fisheries and Oceans  
CanadaPêches et Océans  
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## How do species get on the list?

Species are designated 'at risk' by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent body of experts that assesses wildlife according to a broad range of scientific data. The federal Cabinet then decides whether those species should be listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. This decision is made after consultations with affected stakeholders and other groups.

### Key steps in the process:

1. COSEWIC assesses and designates a species
2. DFO consults with stakeholders and the Minister of the Environment provides advice to Cabinet
3. Cabinet determines whether to list species under SARA
4. DFO updates fisheries management plans to comply with SARA
5. DFO develops recovery strategies with fishing industry and provincial and territorial governments
6. DFO develops compliance program

## Species on the list

Whenever a species is considered for listing under SARA, the potential impact on commercial fisheries will always be taken into account. Many of the listed species are caught as bycatch in commercial fisheries. These include leatherback turtles, inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon, and Northern and spotted wolffish. Of note among the species being considered for addition to the SARA list are: the cusk, several populations of Atlantic cod, bocaccio, Sakinaw and Cultus Lake sockeye, and interior Fraser River coho. For a full list, please contact Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

## Key features of the Act for fishers

The *Species at Risk Act* became law in June 2003. Enforcement begins in June 2004—meaning it will then be illegal to harm or kill species listed under SARA, or to destroy their critical habitats. For certain, commercial fishers need to know what steps they should take to comply with the Act. DFO will make it a priority to communicate those measures before the enforcement period begins.

Some recovery strategies for species listed under the Act won't be finalized until 2006. In the interim, the relevant fisheries management plans will be modified to include new management measures that commercial fishers must put into immediate action. These modifications will be developed in consultation with the fishing industry.

In certain cases, the restriction against harming or killing species at risk may be modified. For example, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans can issue permits under SARA, which allow for a limited amount of bycatch of listed species, so long as the level of bycatch does not jeopardize the survival or recovery of the species.

These permits will be granted only after DFO conducts a scientific assessment to fully understand the impact of commercial fisheries on listed species at risk.



### For more information

To find out more about SARA, please visit:

- [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca) (click on *Species at Risk* link)
- [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca)
- [www.SARAreistry.gc.ca](http://www.SARAreistry.gc.ca)

Or contact DFO at:

Email: [info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)  
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## Aquatic Species at Risk

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# The Aquaculture Industry and the Species at Risk Act

Canada's growing aquaculture industry has the potential to play an important role in the economic future of the country. At Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), we're committed to helping the industry develop in a responsible manner that will benefit all Canadians—through sound, future-minded management practices. These days, many aquaculture operators have questions about the implications of Canada's new *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) for their businesses; this fact sheet provides an overview.

## What it's all about

The *Species at Risk Act* was created to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of species at risk due to human activity, and to manage species of special concern, making sure they don't become endangered or threatened. SARA not only prohibits the killing, harming, harassing, capturing or taking of species at risk, but also makes it illegal to destroy their critical habitats. The Act became law in June 2003, and becomes enforceable in June 2004.

Obviously, no single organization or entity can be responsible on its own for achieving the goals of SARA. Governments and stakeholder groups across Canada must all work together. In fact, SARA was designed to encourage such cooperation.

## Aquatic species at risk

Today, 34 aquatic species have been classified 'at risk' under SARA; an additional 28 species are under consideration. Those listed currently include the spotted and northern wolffish, Atlantic whitefish, and Inner Bay of Fundy salmon as well as marine animals such as the leatherback turtle and sea otter.

## Working together

Under SARA, DFO must produce recovery strategies and action plans for aquatic species listed as endangered or threatened. Recovery strategies for freshwater and marine species currently listed under SARA will be developed in collaboration with the fishing and aquaculture industries, and must be completed as soon as 2006.

At DFO, we intend to work with associations and members of the aquaculture industry to ensure that the protective measures we develop as part of these strategies and plans are practical, effective, and environmentally sustainable. We want to ensure that a sustainable aquaculture industry can be maintained while meeting the requirements of SARA to protect species at risk.

## What SARA means for aquaculture operators

Under SARA, restrictions may be introduced on where new aquaculture operations may be established. Areas of critical habitat may be designated "off limits," and access to brood stocks may, in some areas, be subject to special controls or prohibitions. The same could be true of pesticide use. There may also be changes required to methods of predator control and waste disposal.

For example, the harbour porpoise—identified as a species of special concern—may be affected by audio-based predator control systems in certain areas. It is conceivable that, in future, restrictions may be put in place to protect this marine mammal. As recovery strategies are completed and critical habitats identified over time for species at risk, additional restrictions may be put in place to protect other species potentially affected by aquaculture operations, such as the Inner Bay of Fundy salmon and the Northern abalone.



While SARA has many *possible* implications for the aquaculture industry, it is important to appreciate that it is not yet clear what specific measures will be required. What is clear, however, is that any measures developed by DFO will be in collaboration with the affected sectors.

### How do species get on the list?

Species are designated 'at risk' by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent body of experts that assesses wildlife according to a broad range of scientific data. The federal Cabinet then decides whether those species should be listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. This decision is made after consultations with affected stakeholders and other groups.

#### Key steps in the process:

1. COSEWIC assesses and designates a species
2. DFO consults with stakeholders and the Minister of the Environment provides advice to Cabinet
3. Cabinet determines whether to list species under SARA
4. DFO updates fisheries management plans to comply with SARA

5. DFO develops recovery strategies with industry and provincial and territorial governments
6. DFO develops compliance program

### Key features of the Act for the aquaculture industry

The *Species at Risk Act* became law in June 2003. Enforcement begins in June 2004—meaning it will then be illegal to harm or kill species listed under SARA, or to destroy their critical habitats. For certain, aquaculturists need to know what they should do to comply with the Act. DFO will make it a priority to communicate those requirements before the enforcement period begins.

In rare cases, the restriction against harming or killing species at risk may be modified. For example, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans can issue permits under SARA that allow for activities affecting a listed species, so long as the degree of impact does not jeopardize the survival or recovery of the species. These permits will be granted only after DFO conducts a scientific assessment to fully understand the impact of these activities on listed species at risk.

Because many of the recovery strategies for species listed under the Act won't be finalized until 2006, aquaculturists will in the meantime receive ongoing guidance through consultations.

### A tool for the industry

Whenever an aquatic species is considered for listing under SARA, DFO will always consider the potential impact on aquaculture. At DFO, we recognize that Canada's aquaculture industry has faced many challenges establishing itself—and we want to help it grow in an environmentally sustainable manner. We are involved in the site-approval and site-planning processes, and will always seek to meet the requirements of SARA in the context of supporting the needs of aquaculture practitioners and other users. We would like to point out, as well, that the scientific data produced through SARA studies may prove to be a valuable asset to the industry in helping it develop long-term, integrated management plans. This information is available as a resource to be used by those who know the industry best.

#### For more information

To find out more about SARA, please visit:

- [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca) (click on *Species at Risk* link)
- [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca)
- [www.SARAreistry.gc.ca](http://www.SARAreistry.gc.ca)

Or contact DFO at:

Email: [info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)  
Telephone: 1-866-266-6603



## Aquatic Species at Risk

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# Recreational Boating and the Species at Risk Act

For millions of Canadians boating is a way of life, offering the chance to get out and see the world from a fresh perspective. It's a pastime that comes with certain responsibilities. And with the introduction of Canada's new *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), it is likely that some of those responsibilities will evolve. Here's what you need to know.

## Protecting wildlife

The *Species at Risk Act* was created to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of species at risk due to human activity, and to manage species of special concern, making sure they don't become endangered or threatened. SARA not only prohibits the killing, harming, harassing, capturing or taking of species at risk, but also makes it illegal to destroy their critical habitats. The Act became law in June 2003, and becomes enforceable in June 2004.

## Aquatic species at risk

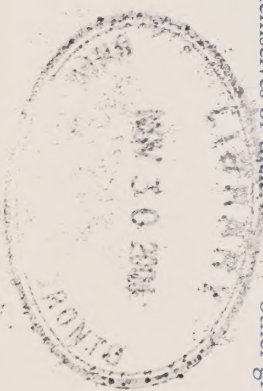
Today, 34 aquatic species have been classified 'at risk' under SARA; an additional 28 species are under consideration. Those listed currently include the spotted and northern wolffish, Atlantic whitefish, and Inner Bay of Fundy salmon as well as marine animals such as the leatherback turtle and sea otter.

Under SARA, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) must produce recovery strategies and action plans for aquatic species listed as endangered or threatened. Recovery strategies for fish and marine species currently listed under SARA will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, and must be completed as soon as 2006. These strategies and plans may include restrictions on boating activities to protect either the species themselves or their critical habitats.

## What is critical habitat?

To put it simply, critical habitat is vital to the survival or recovery of wildlife species. It may be an identified breeding site, nursery area or feeding ground. For species at risk, such habitats are of the utmost importance, and where possible must be identified in recovery strategies or action plans.

Species are designated 'at risk' by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent body of experts that assesses wildlife according to a broad range of scientific data. The federal Cabinet then decides whether those species should be listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. This decision is made after consultations with affected stakeholders and other groups.





Once the decision is made to list a species, SARA requires recovery strategies and action plans to be developed. These strategies must identify threats to critical habitat and outline approaches to addressing those threats.

## What it could mean

Today, there are many boating restrictions in effect in Canada. Most of these were created to ensure public safety, but SARA introduces a new set of considerations. It is possible that environmentally motivated boating restrictions may be added in years to come to protect species at risk. These could include restrictions on speed limits or boating activity, as well as prohibitions against the use of motorized vessels on particular bodies of water.

Whatever the case, restrictions will be communicated clearly. DFO has made it a long-term priority to communicate information about species at risk to stakeholder groups, conservation associations, and provincial and municipal environmental authorities across the country.

It is important to understand that the process for listing a species under SARA is thorough and well considered. Decisions are not made lightly; significant scientific research is conducted and key stakeholder groups are always consulted.

It is also important to appreciate that while SARA represents a significant step forward in Canada's ability to prevent the extinction of wildlife species, it fits into the regulatory framework that exists today. In other words, while you may as a boater have new rules to be aware of when travelling your favourite waterway, those rules will be administered exactly as they are today.

## What can you do?

Every one of us can make a difference in helping to protect species at risk and their habitats. Make sure you're in compliance with SARA by obeying the latest boating restrictions in your area: reduce speed and keep a safe distance from critical habitat where indicated. You can also take active steps to protect species at risk in your community. The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (HSP) sponsors local stewardship activities. It is managed jointly by Environment Canada, DFO and Parks Canada. For more information, visit the HSP website at: <http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih>.

To find out more about where species at risk reside, contact local environmental groups, municipal and provincial governments, as well as the SARA registry at [www.SARAreistry.gc.ca](http://www.SARAreistry.gc.ca).

## For more information

To find out more about SARA, please visit:

- [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca) (click on *Species at Risk* link)
- [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca)
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## Aquatic Species at Risk

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# Recreational Fishing and the Species at Risk Act

Protecting wildlife species from the risk of extinction is the responsibility of all Canadians. Whether you're a sports fisher, lodge owner, fishing-tour operator, tackle or boat retailer, one of the most important things you can do is understand your obligations under the country's new *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

## What it's all about

The *Species at Risk Act* was created to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of species at risk due to human activity, and to manage species of special concern, making sure they don't become endangered or threatened. SARA not only prohibits the killing, harming, harassing, capturing, taking or possessing of species at risk, but also makes it illegal to destroy

their critical habitats. The Act became law in June 2003, and becomes enforceable in June 2004.

Obviously, no single organization or entity can be responsible on its own for achieving the goals of SARA. Governments and stakeholder groups across Canada must all work together. In fact, SARA was designed to encourage such cooperation.

## Aquatic species at risk

Today, 34 aquatic species have been classified 'at risk' under SARA; an additional 28 species are under consideration. Those listed currently include the spotted and northern wolfish, Atlantic whitefish, and Inner Bay of Fundy salmon as well as marine animals such as the leatherback turtle and sea otter.

## Working together

Under SARA, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) must produce recovery strategies and action plans for aquatic species listed as endangered or threatened. Recovery strategies for fish and marine species currently listed under SARA must be completed as soon as 2006. Those strategies will be developed in consultation with stakeholders, and will take into account the potential impact of changes on recreational fishers in Canada.

The ultimate goal of these consultations is to ensure that the protective measures we develop at DFO are practical, effective, and in keeping with a sound fisheries management approach. The possibilities include restrictions on bycatch of listed species; modifications of fishing gear; modifications of fishing season openings; and closures or restrictions on fishing areas.





## How do species get on the list?

Species are designated 'at risk' by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent body of experts that assesses wildlife according to a broad range of scientific data. The federal Cabinet then decides whether those species should be listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. This decision is made after consultations with affected stakeholders and other groups.

## What SARA could mean for recreational fishers

Of course, recreational fishing in Canada has long been subject to conservation regulations. SARA does not change this—instead, it adds a new set of considerations to the guidelines and procedures that are already in place. Existing fisheries management plans will continue to outline what can be caught, when and where. Annual fishing guides will include notices of restrictions. Fishing-area closures will be posted on the web, on signs near fishing areas, and communicated through local associations and authorities. And if you accidentally catch a fish you know to be protected under SARA, return it to the water.

### Key steps in the process:

1. COSEWIC assesses and designates a species
2. DFO consults with stakeholders and the Minister of the Environment provides advice to Cabinet
3. Cabinet determines whether to list species under SARA
4. DFO updates fisheries management plans to comply with SARA
5. DFO develops recovery strategies with fishing industry and provincial and territorial governments
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### For more information

To find out more about SARA, please visit:

- [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca) (click on *Species at Risk* link)
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## Aquatic Species at Risk

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# The Species at Risk Act and Critical Habitat for Aquatic Species

For years now, it has been recognized that to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct, their habitat must be protected. Canada's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) presents new requirements for identifying *critical habitat*—and new measures for protecting it. Whether you're installing a new culvert, starting a new dredging operation, or developing a hydroelectric power dam, here's what you should know about SARA.

## What it's all about

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) was created to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct. It requires Canada to provide for the recovery of species at risk due to human activity, and to manage species of special concern, making sure they don't become endangered or threatened. SARA not only prohibits the killing, harming, harassing, capturing or taking

of species at risk, but also makes it illegal to destroy their critical habitats. The Act became law in June 2003, and becomes enforceable in June 2004.

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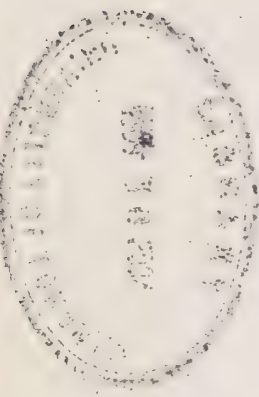
## Aquatic species at risk

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## Working together

Under SARA, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) must produce recovery strategies and action plans for aquatic species listed as endangered or threatened. Recovery strategies for fish and marine species currently listed under SARA will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, and must be completed as soon as 2006.

These strategies and plans will identify any habitat considered critical to the survival or recovery of a species, and will outline protective steps to be taken: from education and stewardship initiatives to modifying or restricting development activities, enhancing habitat or undertaking further scientific research to better understand species and their habitat. Protective measures will be developed by DFO in collaboration with affected stakeholders.





## What is critical habitat?

To put it simply, critical habitat is vital to the survival or recovery of wildlife species. It may be an identified breeding site, nursery area or feeding ground. For species at risk, such habitats are of the utmost importance, and must be identified, where possible, and included in recovery strategies or action plans.

Species are designated 'at risk' by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent body of experts that assesses wildlife according to a broad range of scientific data. The federal Cabinet then decides whether those species should be listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. This decision is made after consultations with affected stakeholders and other groups.

Once the decision is made to list a species, SARA requires recovery strategies and action plans to be developed. These strategies must identify threats to critical habitat and outline approaches to addressing those threats.

## The process remains the same

While SARA makes it illegal to destroy the critical habitat of species at risk and may impose new restrictions on development and construction,

it doesn't change the process by which projects are reviewed. Any works—from marinas to bridges—must be reviewed by local, provincial or federal authorities (or some combination of the three) and authorized through formal approvals, permits and the like. The process of submitting projects for approval is unchanged by SARA.

## SARA and related legislation

SARA is not the only consideration affecting the review of proposals for projects on or near water. These proposals are often reviewed under the *Fisheries Act*, the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and, in some cases, assessed under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). These reviews and assessments will now consider the presence of species and habitats protected under SARA.

The vision of DFO is to marry the considerations of SARA seamlessly with those of other legislation such as the CEAA, the *Fisheries Act* and the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, all of which include relevant protections of their own. For example, under the *Fisheries Act* it is already unlawful to harmfully alter, disrupt or destroy fish habitat without authorization to do so from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

## What can you do?

It is your responsibility to make sure that any projects you undertake comply with SARA. The Government of Canada will communicate those responsibilities to stakeholder groups, conservation associations, and provincial and municipal environmental authorities across the country. To find out more about species at risk, please contact your appropriate municipal, provincial and federal government representatives, or view the SARA public registry online at [www.SARAreistry.gc.ca](http://www.SARAreistry.gc.ca).

Apart from making sure you're in compliance with SARA, you can also take active steps to protect the habitat of species at risk. The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (HSP) sponsors local stewardship activities. It is managed jointly by Environment Canada, DFO and Parks Canada. For more information, visit the HSP website at: <http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih>.

### For more information

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